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ABSTRACT

A discussion of the institutional mechanisms and individual processes through which graduate students are socialized to the norms of professional practice in educational administration are presented in this paper, which builds a conceptual framework that draws from research on adult socialization, the socialization and career patterns of school administrators, and from analyses of graduate and professional student socialization paying attention also to the particular concerns of women. A conclusion is that the normative aspects of professional socialization must be considered in the development of commitment among graduate students. Recommendations include structuring preparation programs to provide intensive experiences that require commitment of significant personal resources, basing programs on strong normative consensus, and development of mechanisms that encourage faculty-graduate student interaction. One figure illustrating the conceptual framework is included. (55 references) (LMI)

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THE PROFESSIONAL SOCIALIZATION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

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THE PROFESSIONAL SOCIALIZATION OF GRADUATE STUDENTS IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Most of the writing on the improvement of graduate preparation in educational administration focuses primarily on the desired substantive content of programs, ranging through the usual gamut from more theory to more "relevant" practical experience (e.g., Griffiths, et al., 1988; Pitner, 1988). However, the normative dimensions of graduate education (including the development of values, ethics, and personal commitments to an identifiable group of professional colleagues) have generally been neglected. Hence, it is necessary to frame graduate preparation of educational administrators in the broader context of professional socialization which explicitly takes into consideration both substantive and normative dimensions of graduate education.

This paper expands and applies to the study of graduate students in educational administration the now rather dated work of Bragg (1976) on the socialization of graduate and professional students. It builds a conceptual framework that draws from research on adult socialization (Mortimer & Simmons, 1978; Miller & Wagner, 1971), the professional socialization and career patterns of school administrators (Miklos, 1988; Ronkowski & Iannaccone, 1989), and from more general conceptual analyses of graduate and professional student socialization (Stein & Weidman, 1989; Ondrack, 1971). Attention is also paid to the particular concerns of women (Lynch, 1990; Ortiz & Marshall, 1988; Shakeshaft, 1988) and minority (Valverde & Brown, 1988; Jackson, 1988) graduate students in educational administration.

With the continuing desire of state legislatures, licensing bodies, and the public constituency of education to ensure the preparation of well-qualified educational administrators, such an analysis is particularly timely. In addition, it reflects a further effort to order and provide conceptual

underpinnings for issues raised in the current literature, including drawing implications for the design of graduate programs in educational administration.

Following Brim (1966, p. 3), we define the term socialization in a comprehensive sense as "the process by which persons acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that make them more or less able members of their society." This definition is consistent with the seminal study of professional socialization by Merton, et al. (1957, p. 41) in which they asserted that medical students "learn a professional role by so combining its component knowledge annd skills, attitudes and values as to be motivated and able to perform this role in a professionally and socially acceptable fashion." Both of these authors make it very clear that socialization has both cognitive and affective dimensions.

While we acknowledge our indebtedness to the taxonomic work of Stark, et al. (1986), focusing only on the academic goals of professional education is not sufficient. The processes through which students confront those academic goals must also be understood in order to come to grips with the complexity of graduate and professional education. Consequently, both curricular and normative aspects of the graduate students' experiences in higher education as well as the social processes and structures through which students are socialized need to be addressed. The normative aspect is reflected especially in the development by graduate students of commitments to and identification with a profession, including its ethical practice. Particular attention is also paid to role acquisition (Thornton & Nardi, 1975) and role conflict (Getzels, 1963).

The Professions in Society

This paper is concerned with the process of preparation for those occupations for which practitioners can be considered to be "professionals" according to the following criteria outlined by

Moore and Rosenbloom (1970):

> 1. The professional practices a full-time occupation, which comprises the principal source of his earned income . . . .
>
> 2. A more distinctively professional qualification is commitment to a calling, that is the treatment of the occupation and all of its requirements as an enduring set of normative and behavioral expectations.
>
> 3. Those who pursue occupations of relatively high rank in terms of criteria of professionalism are likely to be set apart from the laity by various signs and symbols, but by the same token are identified with their peers–often in formalized organizations . . . .
>
> 4. The possession of esoteric but useful knowledge and skills, based on specialized training or education of exceptional duration and perhaps of exceptional difficulty . . . .
>
> 5. In the practice of his occupation, to perceive the needs of individual or collective clients that are relevant to his competence and to attend to those needs by competent performance . . . .
>
> 6. The professional proceeds by his own judgment and authority; he thus enjoys autonomy restrained by responsibility (pp. 5-6).

These characteristics include expectations about professional practice that are both normative (calling, service orientation, and autonomy) and substantive (education of exceptional duration and difficulty).

On the basis of these six characteristics, the work of school administrators can legitimately be classified as "professional." However, this classification scheme also implies that the term "professional practice" should refer to something more complex and sophisticated than the everyday administrative behavior of the school administrator. Consequently, we are using the term "professional practice" to mean work that is informed by advanced knowledge of both theory and practical skills of administration presumably possessed neither by the layperson nor by those for whom the educational administrative practitioner is responsible.

However, despite matching each of the characteristics of a profession at a basic level, the status of educational administration continues to be a matter of some contention, most frequently with respect to the questionable rigor of the graduate educational programs preparing school administrators. Because virtually all preparation programs require students to earn at least the equivalent of a graduate degree (masters for principals and increasingly the doctorate for superintendents), this represents "education of exceptional duration." It is, however, much more difficult to convince critics that graduate preparation programs in educational administration are "of exceptional difficulty." To obtain administrative licensure, most states require the accumulation of credits in specified areas rather than a coherent academic program. This means that it is possible for students to accumulate credits from several different institutions without even being a regular matriculant at any single institution. Most preparation programs in educational administration are oriented to part-time, evening students. Even surveys of practicing school administrators find consistently that they consider their university preparation "to have been easy, boring, and only intermittently useful to them in their work" (Peterson & Finn, 1988, p. 95).

Because others have addressed the specific content of preparation programs in educational administration (Griffiths, et al., 1988; Pitner, 1988), it is not necessary to deal with that here. We are more interested in the normative dimensions of preparation, some of which are certainly reflected in the way that the educational experiences of novice "professional practitioners" are organized. It is to these normative aspects of professional programs that we now turn to build the conceptual underpinnings for understanding the graduate education component of professional socialization.

Professional Socialization

From an institutional level, professisonal socialization can be defined as a process through which students "acquire the values and attitudes, the interest, skills, and knowledge, in short the culture, current in the groups of which they are, or seek to become, a member. It refers to the learning of social roles" (Merton, et al., p. 287). Alternatively, professional socialization may be described at the individual level as the process through which people acquire a professional identity. For example, Becker and Carper (1956) contend that socialization is a process through which a person develops an "image of himself as the holder of a particular specialized position in the division of labor" (p. 289). Similarly, Bucher and Stellings (1975) claim that the result of the socialization process is a "specific professional identity, commitment and sense of career" (p. 20).

Following a line of argument similar to that presented in describing a profession, it is reasonable to assert that the professional socialization process has both cognitive and affective dimensions, and that learning appropriate performance of the professional role requires the application of advanced knowledge and technical skills to the problems presented. Additionally, professional practice requires both adherence to certain standards of practice and commitment to the requirements of society over personal gain (Freidson, 1986). Consequently, it can be claimed that a central purpose of post-baccalaureate educational programs is to prepare novices for professional practice by socializing them into the cognitive and affective dimensions of anticipated professional roles.

Classic studies of the preparation of students for professional roles have attempted to clarify socialization processes and to explain the acquisition of the norms, values, and attitudes of the professional role (e.g., Merton, Reader, and Kendall, 1975; Lortie, 1959 and 1975; Becker, Geer,

Hughes, and Strauss, 1961; Olessen and Wittaker, 1968; and Bucher and Stelling, 1977). These studies have looked at socialization as a developmental process which can be analyzed at the individual and institutional levels, and which has both informal and formal dimensions.

It has been argued that each profession fulfills a unique function in society. This view is consistent with Durkheim (1984) who contends that society is based on shared beliefs and values and bound together by a functional interdependence of its parts (i.e., organic solidarity) based on the division of labor in society. For Durkheim, the purpose of socialization is to forge normative consensus, so that novices can perform a functional role in the division of labor and thereby perpetuate social solidarity. Durkheim's views are particularly important because they provide a rationale for claiming that clearly defined social roles are important for society, and that the means by which persons are prepared for particular roles are also important for maintaining stable social structures. Talcott Parsons (1951) expressed a similar view when he stated:

> Socialization is the learning of any orientation of functional significance to the operation of a system of complementary expectations . . . . (It is) the internalization of certain patterns of value-orientation. This result is conceived to be the outcome of certain processes of interaction in roles. (pp. 208-209)

Parsons argued that the normative aspects of roles (i.e., "paterns of value-orientation") were essential to understanding the ways in which occupants of related roles behaved with respect to one another. This implies that part of the socialization to a professional role involves developing commitments to a community of like professionals who are expected to provide peer review (including setting standards for licensure, periodic renewal, and necesssary sanctions) and be the primary referant for professional practice (Vollmer and Mills, 1966; Etzioni, 1969; Freidson, 1984). In short, a significant aspect of the socialization process in graduate education involves internalization of and devlopment of commitments to professional norms.

Educational Institutions and Professional Socialization

John Meyer (1977) argues that there are two basic views of the functions of educational institutions. The first view is that the primary function of educational institutions is the "transmission of the culture of a society along with the political function of inculcating commitment to the existing political order" (Trent, Braddock, and Henderson, 1985, p. 307). This is the traditional view of an educational institution which socializes individuals into social roles.

A second view of educational institutions is that they provide sorting and selection processes which lead to the placement or allocation of individuals into social positions, including "cooling out" those who are judged to be unsuitable (Meyer, 1977). In this paper, we extend Meyer's discussion to the level of professional education, focusing on the importance of both socialization and allocation processes of post-baccalaureate professional programs in institutions of higher education.

When professional education is viewed as the transmitter of professional knowledge and skills, it is assumed that socialization processes develop commitment to professional norms, values and attitudes. This view generated considerable interest in the identification of professional norms and values. Early literature is less concerned with explaining outcomes than describing socialization processes, discussing the extent to which various occupations meet specified criteria, and determining what those criteria ought to be. For example, Greenwood (1966) maintains that:

> . . . professions are distinguishable by possession of 1) a basis of systematic theory, 2) authority recognized by the clientele of the professional group, 3) broader community sanction and approval of its authority, 4) a code of ethics regulating relations of professional persons with clients and with colleagues, and 5) a professional culture sustained by formal professional associations (Greenwood, 1966, p. 6).

Greenwood also discusses at length the importance of values, norms, and symbols to the concept of professionalization (Greenwood, 1966, p. 16). In the same volume, Goode discusses the

differences between professions and non-professions. These sociologists developed the characteristics of a profession in an "ideal type" construction and either explicitly or implicitly assumed that the capacities for appropriate role performance (norms, values, and attitudes as well as necessary skills) are desired outcomes of professional education.

There are a number of conceptual works on adult socialization which reflect this view of professional education. The work of Clausen (1968) assumes that society is formed and defined by consensus and shared norms, that for society to continue, novices must accept these beliefs as well as assume a socially defined, functional role. The socializing agent moves the novice, who has not as yet internalized normatively defined values and attitudes, or who does not have a clear concept of a role, to a socialized state through social interaction and the selective use of rewards and sanctions for role behavior. In order for socialization to be efficient and effective, there must be normative clarity and consensus among the socializers.

This perspective is consistent with Brim (1966, p. 4), for whom socialization theory and research are concerned with how the society molds the individual and not how the individual changes society. Consequently, the able individual is one who meets the requirements of the functionally defined social role. These authors assume that individuals learn appropriate role behavior through interaction with others who already hold the expected normative beliefs for a particular social role (p. 90) and who either reward or punish the novice for congruent or non-congruent behavior. Brim goes beyond Clausen, however, by using Mead's theory of symbolic interaction to explain how the individual learns the role of the other through interaction (Manis and Meltzer, 1967).

The implications of the functional view of professional education are that the desired

outcomes can be clearly identified and the educational experiences planned to transmit to, the students both the cognitive and affective dimensions necessary for the beginning practitioner of the professional role. Bragg (1976), for instance, claims that the goals of professional education are clearly known, that the socialization process involves trying on a new role and that it is the responses by novices to role models that determine outcomes. She further assumes role consensus and clarity among role models (primarily faculty) and that the student body is homogenous as well as reinforcing of the anticipated professional role. Because the "components of the socialization process can be identified . . . the conditions for maximizing both the cognitive and affective development" can be built into the learning process (Bragg, 1976, p. 3).

In developing her model of professional socialization, Bragg relied heavily on what is considered an exemplary piece of research in traditional professional socialization, The Student Physician by Merton, Reader, and Kendall (1957). These authors compare the socialization process in professional (medical) education to rationalization, that is, to the scientific organization of education for ensuring efficient and effective transmission of medical culture to the medical students. Merton, et al., assume that the physician role is identified by the medical faculty. Normative consensus is assumed while tension between roles or among the agents of socialization tend to be ignored.

They further claim that socialization is a "process through which individuals are inducted into their culture. It involves the acquisition of attitudes and values, of skills and behavior patterns making up social roles and established in the social structure" (Merton, et al., PP. 40-41). For them, socialization is the result of both direct and indirect processes. The direct process is the didactic teaching in which faculty transmit knowledge and values. The indirect process is interactions of

novices with faculty, peers, patients, and other medical personnel which result in the acquisition of the attitudes, values and behavior patterns appropriate for the medical role.

In summary, the structural-functional view of professional education assumes that the social order is maintained when novices are prepared by educational institutions at the post-baccalaureate level to assume professional roles which are characterized by normatively prescribed skills, values, and attitudes. During socialization, it is the individual who is molded to fit into the prescribed professional roles.

An advantage of this view of professional education is that the socialization processes can be rationalized, since it is possible to identify the desired impact of professional education and to select and implement a plan which is thought to bring about the results desired. The educational evaluation process is simplified because the measure of success is the efficiency and effectiveness of the institution in achieving its stated goals. A disadvantage of this view is that in assuming a linear, uni-directional relationship between educational processes and expected impact, the complexity and richness of the professional role and educational process are ignored.

A variant of the socialization approach to structural-functional analysis is the allocation approach. This view of professional education minimizes the impact of educational processes on affective outcomes by assuming that it is the sorting or selection processes of the institution which place the individuals into social roles. This view claims that the educational institution establishes student admissions or selection policies which admit only students who are believed to already have assumed the normative dimensions of the professional role to which they aspire or admit only those into which the institution is chartered to place them (Meyer, 1977). Others (e.g., Mortimer and Simmons, 1978) call this activity within the individual anticipatory socialization. In either instance,

the institution might assume responsibility for cognitive development but not affective development of the student. A good example of research based on this view of professional education is that of Lortie (1957) who claims that law schools select for admission those students who occupy a social status commensurate with the status of the type of law practice into which graduates of a particular educational institution are allocated.

A disadvantage of this view is that an emphasis on the sorting processes of an institution raises questions of equity of occupational opportunity for individuals from lower status origins. If the educational institutions assumes little responsibility for the socialization processes and only selects individuals for admission who already exhibit appropriate affective characteristics for the position sought, and individual's moving into higher status positions is unlikely. Another major consequence of adopting this view of professional education is that the prospective professional receives no guidance in integrating the cognitive and affective dimensions of the professional role.

Neither of these structural-functional views of professional educational institutions is adequate for understanding socialization into the learned professions because each makes assumptions about processes without considering the adequacy of the evidence to support the assumption. Each view makes unacceptable assumptions that limits it to focusing only looks at parts rather than the whole of the educational process. A model of socialization into the learned professions should acknowledge the impact of a number of elements and consider professional socialization as a complex process upon which there are a wide variety of pressures.

A Conceptual Framework for Professional Socialization

On the basis of the foregoing discussion, we developed a framework (Stein & Weidman, 1989) for describing professional socialization in post-baccalaureate higher education (See Figure

1.). This framework is based on research dealing with the ways in which novices are prepared to assume professional positions in society (Goode, 1957; Moore & Rosenbloom, 1970; Ondrack, 1975; Freidson, 1983). It is an extension and application of the Weidman (1989) model of undergraduate socialization to the analysis of student socialization at the post-baccalaureate education level. The framework illustrates the complexity of the professional socialization process by incorporating the relationships among student background characteristics, the educational experience, socialization outcomes, and mediating elements such as the impact of society, professional practice, and non-educational reference groups. While there is a general assumption that the model depicts a set of processes with a temporal dimension implying some degree of causality, it is also assumed that dimensions interact with one another in somewhat different ways at different times during graduate education. Thus, contrary to the uni-directionality assumed by the traditional socialization model (Bragg, 1976) the dimensions of the framework shown in Figure 1 are assumed to be linked in a bi-directional fashion. This suggests that there is a reciprocity of influences on the professional novices such that, for instance, the processes and contexts of the educational experience will influence each other and the socialization outcomes will affect the normative context and content of the education experience of future novices (Kerckhoff, 1986, p. 103).

Further, the framework incorporates aspects of the socialization process at both the institutional and individual levels. At the institutional level the model suggests that novices are integrated into the professional community of faculty and professional practitioners as they adopt its norms, attitudes and values and because of them the authority and status of the professional role. At the individual level, the model suggests that novices willingly accept professional norms as they begin to identify with and become committed to a profession.

By acknowledging both institutional and individual dimensions of socialization this framework suggests that "socialization is not merely the transfer from, one group to another in a static social structure, but the active creation of a new identity through a personal definition of the situation" (Reinharz, 1979, p. 374). In a similar vein, "socialization is a product of a gradual accumulation of experiences of certain people, particularly those with whom we stand in primary relations, and significant others are those who are actually involved in the cultivation of abilities, values and outlook" (Manis and Meltzer, 1967, p. 168). This emphasizes of importance of interpersonal interaction among both graduate students and faculty for professional socialization.

Also acknowledged is the impact of the individual on socialization processes and outcomes. For example, the framework suggests that the fundamental outcome of the socialization process is not simply movement into a set of static functional roles, but that role behavior may change over time due to tension between individual needs and institutional and role requirements (Getzels, 1963). Roles may change because of reinterpretation of the role by novices and their teachers, because of changing social requirements, the efforts of professional associations, and the impact of current professional practice.

The framework shows the importance of considering the complex association among student background characteristics (e.g., age, gender, race and ethnicity), aspects of the socialization process (within the graduate educational preparation program as well as in the extra-institutional professional and personal environments experienced by adult students), and outcomes of the educational experience (e.g, knowledge, beliefs, and skills).

The importance of considering student characteristics when trying to assess the impact of the educational experience on outcomes is particularly evident in the literature on gender effects.

Hite (1985), for instance, found that female graduate students who had male advisors were less likely than those who had female advisors to become productive scholars. This was attributed to their difficulty in identifying with and establishing a mentor relationship with the advisor. Epstein (1981) also notes a contradiction between traditional female role socialization and the socialization important for occupying traditionally male professional roles. Also, Bush and Simmons (1981) note that the impact of an educational experience will be increased when an individual's beliefs about a role and his or her performances in that role are similar to the image of a role held by the socializer. In general, this framework suggests that socialization research should consider the impact of student background characteristics on socialization and not assume homogeneity of the graduate student body, a claim made by the traditional model (Bragg, 1976, p. 1).

Several models focus on the socializing impacts of normative contexts and interpersonal relations among an organization's members (Brim, and Wheeler, 1966; Weidman, 1989) and acknowledge the effects of normative consensus and clarity (Ondrack, 1975; Bucher and Stellings, 1975; and Katz and Hamett, 1977). However, the present framework shows that there may be competing socializing agents and that the novices' personal needs or interpretation of the context may alter the socializing experience and its impact (Olesen and Whittaker, 1968).

Role modeling is one example of an interpersonal process connoted by the framework. This reflects the claim by many (e.g., Merton, et al., 1957; Rosen and Bates, 1967; and Pease, 1967) that the faculty act as role models for novice professionals. However, the framework also indicates that there can be competing role models.

Another example of role tension is that noted by Carroll (1985) who found that faculty sanctions for what is perceived as inappropriate role behavior can actually increase the impact of

non-educational reference groups or non-faculty role models. The framework suggests the importance of ascertaining the identity of role models and the extent of their influence in the socialization process.

As has been discussed, the present framework differs from the traditional, structural-functional model of professional socialization in a number of ways. When compared to a sorting and allocating model, the framework suggests that research can assess the effect of antecedent characteristics on socialization outcomes. Rather than assuming that changes do or do not take place in education, the model provides a framework for examining the nature and extent of any changes.

In summary, the framework suggests that socialization into the professions is conceived as a series of processes whereby the novice: 1) enters the educational institution with values, beliefs, and attitudes about self and professional practices; 2) is exposed to various socializing influences while in school, including normative pressures exerted by faculty and peers, from society, professional organizations, professional practice, and non-educational reference groups; 3) assesses the salience of the various normative pressures for attaining personal and professional goals, and 4) assumes, changes, or maintains those values, aspirations, identity and personal goals that were held at the onset of the socializing experience.

There are a number of advantages to this framework. First, the socialization process is analyzed from both the institutional and individual level. This provides a more thorough conceptualization of the process and facilitates operationalization of variables in empirical research. Second, by identifying the necessity of viewing socializational outcomes at both institutional and individual levels, the model encourages analyses to go beyond the functional analysis of professorial

roles to a more complete understanding of the complex nature of social behavior that incorporate interpretive as well as functional perspectives. Third, the present framework incorporates the importance of assessing the impact of each element, but does not assume that professional socialization processes are linear and uni-directional. This allows consideration of the potential for social processes and structures to be modified through both individual and institutional experience.

Discussion and Implications

The emphasis in the foregoing has been on the institutional mechanisms and individual processes through which graduate students are socialized to the norms of "professional practice" in educational administration. This involves the development of commitments in graduate students to a professional career which includes the obligation to maintain a high level of knowledge and skill that is based on current knowledge of the theory and practice of educational administration as well as the capacity to learn from reflecting on one's own store of experiences. It also includes developing commitments to maintaining an identification with professional peers and being attentive to the need for continuing professional renewal, including contributing to the vitality of preparation programs by seeking opportunities to participate in their continual improvement.

These are important commitments that can be addressed in preparation programs if the normative aspects of professional socialization are taken seriously. All too frequently, faculty are content to sit back and let state boards of education mandate academic requirements for administrator certification and then allow students to "fill in the boxes" through a hodgepodge of courses that are loosely connected, at best. This allows institutions to accommodate large numbers of students, thereby generating substantial tuition revenue. It also virtually guarantees that the average certification student will never get more than a superficial exposure to the sort of intensive

preparation that characterizes professional programs in fields such as law and medicine.

Consequently, taking the principles of professional socialization that have been outlined in this paper requires at a minimum that preparation programs be structured to provide the sorts of intensive experiences that require students to commit significant personal resources for completion. Programs should require intensive, full-time study for at least a year. Faculty should organize and sequence academic work so that it requires the development of increasing higher order skills. Internships should be carefully structured and require that students spend at least one full day per week for an entire semester in a significant administrative role away from the school in which they may be currently teaching.

Faculty should build preparation programs which are undergirded by a strong normative consensus on their structure and functioning. Finally, mechanisms should be developed that encourage significant interaction among faculty and graduate students, not only to build normative consensus around the preparation program but also to provide avenues for subsequent professional ties as well as for mentoring and sponsorship for employment, issues that are particularly important for women and minority aspirants to careers in educational administration (Valverde & Brown, 1988; Ortiz & Marshall, 1988).

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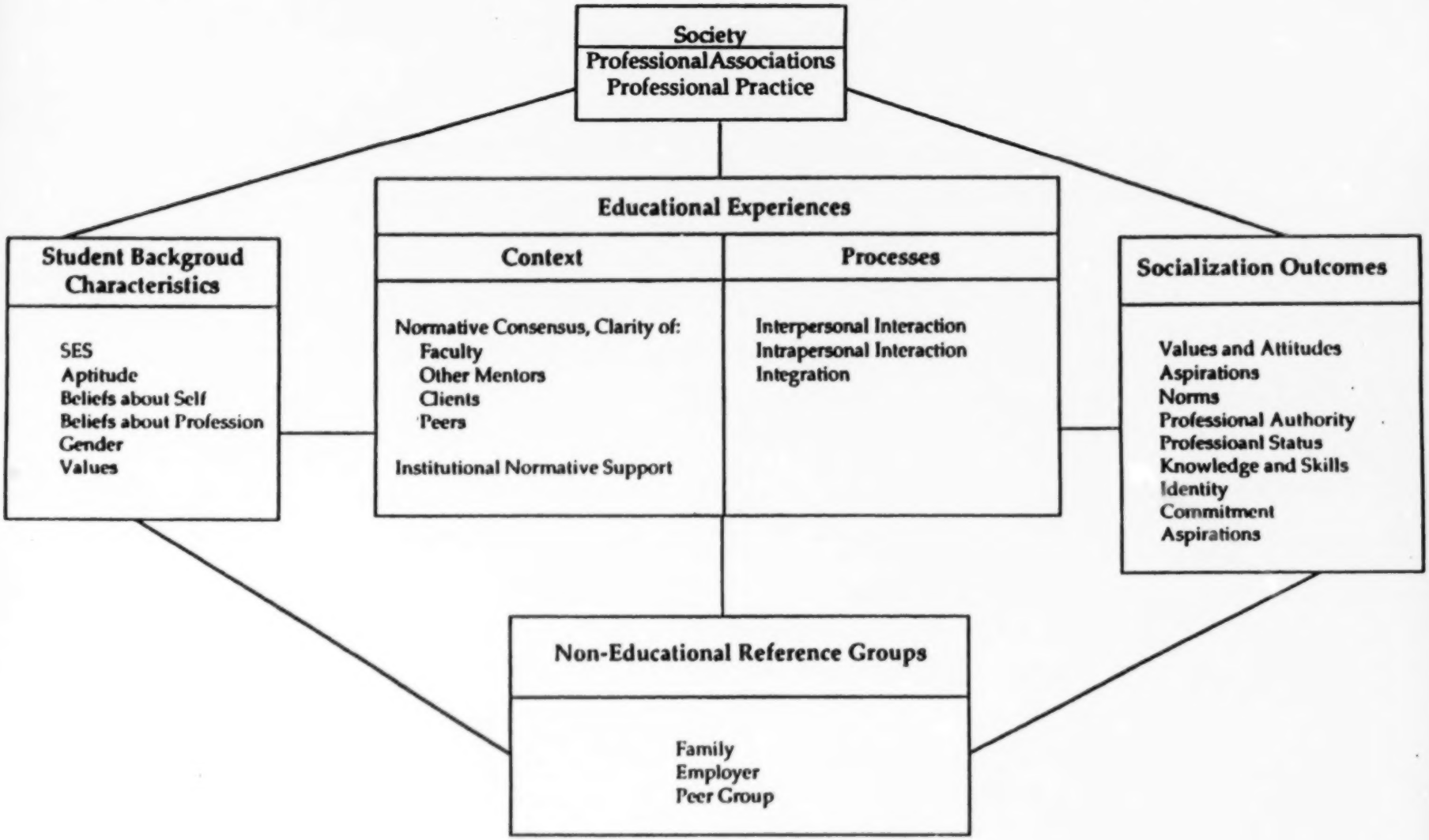

Figure 1: A Conceptual Framework for Professional Socialization